

REMARKS

Applicant is in receipt of the Office Action mailed May 1, 2006. Claims 14 and 31 have been cancelled. Claims 1, 15, 16, and 18 have been amended. Claims 1-13, 15-30, and 32-34 are pending in the case. Reconsideration of the present case is earnestly requested in light of the following remarks.

Objections

Figures 1-4 and 8-11 were objected to for not clearly showing lines and detail. The sheets containing these figures have been replaced (along with all the other figures) with replacement sheets containing amended Figures 1-4 and 8-11, in which lines and detail issues have been addressed. Removal of the objection to the figures is requested.

Allowed Subject Matter

The Office Action indicated that claims 14, 15, and 31-34 included allowed subject matter. Applicant has decided to accept the allowed matter, and has amended independent claims 1, 16, and 18 consistent with the allowed subject matter. Applicant notes that the original dependency of claim 14 from claim 10 was a typographical error, and that the intended dependency of claim 14 was from claim 1, consistent with the dependency of claim 31 from independent claim 18. Thus, in accepting the allowed subject matter, Applicant has amended claims 1, 16, and 18 to include the allowed subject matter of claim 31, and has cancelled claim 31 (and similar claim 14) accordingly.

Section 103 Rejections

Claims 1-13 and 18-30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,278,899 to Piche et al (“Piche”).

Claims 16 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,933,345 to Martin.

As noted above, claims 1, 16, and 18 have been amended to include allowed subject matter, thus rendering their rejection (and that of their respective dependent claims) under section 103 moot.

Applicant thus respectfully submits that the claims as currently written are patentably distinct and non-obvious over the cited references, and are thus allowable.

CONCLUSION

Applicant submits the application is in condition for allowance, and an early notice to that effect is requested.

If any extensions of time (under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136) are necessary to prevent the above referenced application(s) from becoming abandoned, Applicant(s) hereby petition for such extensions. If any fees are due, the Commissioner is authorized to charge said fees to Meyertons, Hood, Kivlin, Kowert & Goetzel PC Deposit Account No. 50-1505/5650-03600/JCH.

Also enclosed herewith are the following items:

- Return Receipt Postcard
- Nine (9) Replacement Sheets Containing Figures 1A-12.

Respectfully submitted,



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IN THE DRAWINGS:

Please replace original sheets 1-12 containing original Figures 1A, 1B, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12, with the attached replacement sheets 1-9 containing amended Figures 1A, 1B, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12. Note that Figures 1-4 and 8-11 have been amended per the Examiner's objection. Figures 5-7 have been placed on a single sheet.